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A View From The Top

A View From The Top

From the Regional Director

Driving a statistical development agenda is never easy. Better statistical outcomes are never an end in themselves. It is how they contribute to better government decision making that drives their value.

This Australian Government is determined to reshape the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agenda to address key policy challenges for Australia through an evidence based co-operative Commonwealth, State and Territory Government effort.

More than ever before, Australia needs strong statistics to identify the scope of issues across Australia, to measure the progress of governments in implementing change and to measure the outcomes of those changes in consistent terms across Australia.

The challenge for the ABS and for governments at all levels is to facilitate the development of our National Statistical System to meet those needs. That will mean better use of all the data we have available to us including data held by all levels of Government.

We will need to work co-operatively to develop the quality and consistency of data, the systems and infrastructure to effectively use that data and the people to analyse the data and turn it into evidence for decision making.

This is a challenge for all of government, not just the ABS. I look forward to meeting it with you.

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Social Atlas

Social Atlas Explore Your City

Kick-start your research with a 2006 Social Atlas.

The 2006 Census Social Atlas Series presents information on a wide variety of census characteristics. Each atlas contains the following chapters:

- Population
- Education
- Income
- Dwellings
- Cultural Diversity
- Labour Force
- Families and Households

Atlases are available for each Australian capital city including some regional centres. They allow you to obtain a bird's eye view of your city and its make-up. So go on, explore your city today!

To obtain a copy of a Social Atlas call 1300 135 070 or visit www.abs.gov.au for more information.

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Western Australian Statistical Indicators (WASI)

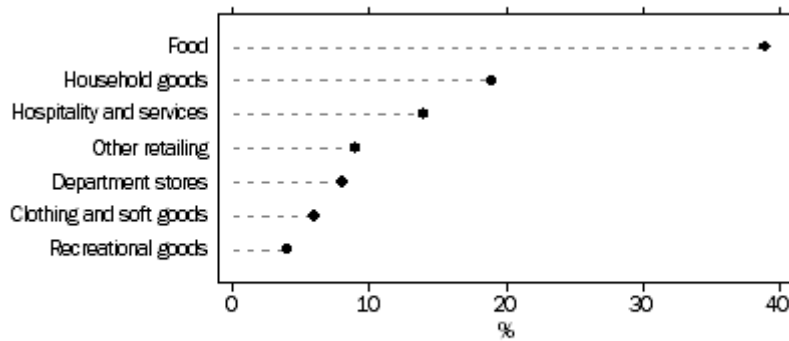
WASI Western Australian Statistical Indicators (cat. no. 1367.5)

The retail industry employs more workers (150,000) than any other industry in WA and accounts for around 5% (\$6 billion) of Gross State Product (GSP) each year.

Over the 10 years to 2006-07, strong economic growth in WA helped fuel household spending in the state. Much of the household spending, which rose 52% (\$19 billion), between 1996-97 and 2006-07, was directed toward the retail industry.

Of the six Australian states, WA recorded the equal second highest rate of increase in retail turnover along with Victoria (61%) while Queensland (72%) had the greatest proportionate rise. In 2006-07, WA's retail spending was mainly on food (39%), household goods (19%) and hospitality and services (14%), similar to spending in 1996-97.

RETAIL TURNOVER(a) BY INDUSTRY GROUP, Western Australia—2006–07



(a) Retail turnover in trend current price terms.

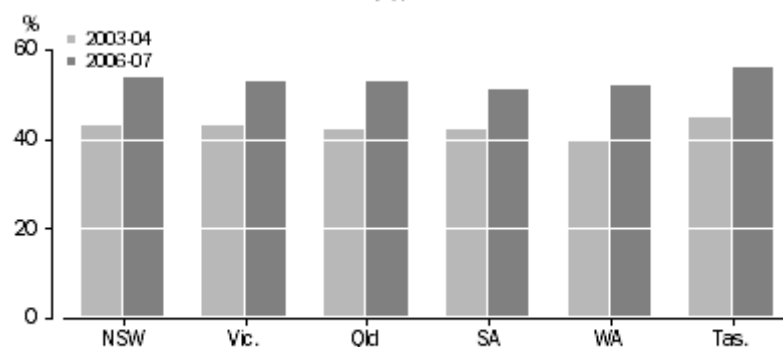
Source: Retail Trade, Australia, 8501.0.

WA accounted for 10% (\$34 billion) of the total income generated by the Australian retail industry in 2005–06, in line with WA's share of the Australian population. WA's retail industry made an operating profit of \$1.7 billion, before tax, in 2005–06, accounting for 13% of Australia's retail industry profits.

There were 27,000 businesses operating in WA's retail industry in 2006–07, 4% (1,100) more than in 2003–04. This growth rate was the second highest among the states behind Queensland with 6% (2,900).

More than half (52% or 14,040) of the businesses operating in WA's retail industry in 2006–07 were small businesses (1–19 employed persons). This proportion was similar to the proportions for the other states. All states recorded increased numbers of small retail businesses between 2003–04 and 2006–07 with WA (40% to 52%), having narrowly the highest proportionate increase.

PROPORTION OF SMALL BUSINESSES(a), Retail trade



(a) Businesses with 1–19 employed persons.

Source: Counts of Australian Businesses, cat. no. 8165.0.

Between 1996–97 and 2006–07, retail industry employment grew by nearly 23% (28,400) in WA, higher than the national rise of 21% and second behind Queensland with a 34% increase.

In 2006–07, there were approximately 14,400 more females (84,400) employed in WA's retail industry than males (70,000). Female employment grew 33% (21,000) between 1996–97 and 2006–07, almost three times the rate of male employment (up 12% or 7,000).

In 2006–07, there were almost as many part-time workers (74,400) in WA's retail industry as full-time workers (80,200). Part-time workers (up 34% or 18,800) have increased almost two and half times the rate of full-time workers (up 14% or 9,800) since 1996–97.

For further information, please call Trevor Draper on (08) 9360 5394.

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Indigenous Story

Indigenous Story

The Past, The Present & The Future

Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples occupy a unique and important place in Australia's society and culture.

In May 1967, a referendum was held to change clauses in the Federal Constitution which were considered discriminative against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As a result of this change, the first official counting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples took place in the 1971 Census.

In 1994 the ABS conducted the first national survey specifically for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. This survey was created as a result of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

In recognising the importance of Indigenous statistics, the ABS has subsequently developed detailed strategies and techniques to collect accurate and useful data.

Indigenous Community

Engagement Strategy (ICES)

In 2004 the ABS established an Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (ICES) which aims to improve the return of information, resulting in an increased quality and relevance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics.

Indigenous Engagement Managers (IEMs) are responsible for driving the ICES and are located in ABS offices across Australia. The role of the IEMs is to build relationships between the ABS and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations.

The WA IEM is Marissa Russ, a Ngarinyin woman from the Kimberley region of WA. Marissa has been with the ABS for three years and has worked in Aboriginal affairs assisting Aboriginal communities, in both WA and the NT, for 16 years.

Some of the activities Marissa has been involved in recently include: ABS website training to communities; helping agencies and individuals to find Indigenous statistics; returning data from the 2006 Census; promoting the ICES (including training packages such as Introduction to the ABS and About the ICES); and pilot testing of the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey in the Pilbara.

In addition to this, Marissa was involved in the 2006 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS) which was conducted on behalf of the then Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

CHINS 2006

The CHINS collects information about all Indigenous Housing Organisations (IHOs) and the dwellings they manage, as well as information about housing, water, sewerage, power

supply, education, health and other services in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The information collected will be used by a range of Commonwealth, state and territory agencies for policy and program development. Housing, water, sewerage, power supply, education, health and other services are all important to the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

NATSISS 2008

From August to December 2008 the ABS will be in the field conducting the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. This survey is part of an established program of Indigenous statistics produced by the ABS to provide a picture of the social well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The 2008 NATSISS is the third in a series of Indigenous social surveys which commenced with the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS) and was followed by the 2002 NATSISS.

For more information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics visit the Indigenous theme page at www.abs.gov.au or call Marissa Russ on 08 9360 5910.

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2008 Year Book

2008 Year Book

100 Years of Australian History

Celebrating 100 Years

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' Year Book Australia is truly a remarkable series. Reaching its hundredth year in 2008, the Year Book has shone a light on the whole nation, communicating information which benefits all Australians in all aspects of their lives.

Year Book Australia is the principal reference work produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It provides a comprehensive and detailed statistical overview of various aspects of the economy and social conditions in Australia. In addition, it contains descriptive matter dealing with Australia's geography and climate, government, international relations, defence, education and health and welfare support systems.

This edition, the 90th, is the latest in a long series of editions extending back to the first in 1908. This edition boasts 28 feature articles including an article to commemorate the centenary year of Scouting, as well as articles on natural hazards, overcoming Indigenous disadvantage, irrigation on Australian farms and sustaining the mineral resources industry.

Scouting

Australian Scouting is celebrating its centenary year in 2008. To commemorate this and to recognise the contribution that scouting has made, and will continue to make to the Australian community, the Australian Government has designated 2008 the Year of the Scout.

Scouting is the largest youth development organisation in Australia and the world, and is a leader in this country's non-formal education sector.

The Scouting Program delivered by Scouts Australia, prepares young people aged from 6 to 26 years for business and community leadership. There are currently around 60,000 members in Australia - boys, girls, young men and women, and their leaders.

Natural Hazards

Natural hazards are a global phenomenon that can strike without warning throughout the world, and impact on every Australian state and territory.

Natural disasters have a significant economic, social, health, environmental and political impact on the community. While some of the impacts of natural disasters can be mitigated, the risk cannot be completely eliminated.

In Australia, natural hazards are estimated to cost an average of \$1.14 billion annually but the cost of individual hazards can be much greater. For example, in 1989 an earthquake cost the community in the New South Wales city of Newcastle an estimated \$4.5 billion.

Natural disasters have helped to shape Australia's history. Notable examples include Cyclone Tracy (1974), Ash Wednesday (1983), the Thredbo landslide (1997), the Sydney hailstorm (1999) and the Canberra bushfires (2003).

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

At 30 June 2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics preliminary Indigenous estimated resident population of Australia was 517,200 or 2.5% of the total population.

According to the 2007 Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report, Indigenous people experienced poorer outcomes than non-Indigenous people on virtually all the headline indicators, but there have been improvements in some areas.

In 2001, the life expectancy of Indigenous people was estimated to be around 17 years lower than that for the total Australian population. Rates of disability and chronic disease also reflect the well-being of Indigenous people. Indigenous adults living in non-remote areas in 2002 were twice as likely as non-Indigenous adults to report a disability resulting in a profound or severe core activity limitation.

Raising the living standards and social and economic outcomes of Indigenous Australians continues to be a high priority for the Australian Government.

The Australian Government's long-term vision is that Indigenous Australians will have the same opportunities as other Australians to make informed choices about their lives, realise their full potential in whatever they choose to do and take responsibility for managing their own affairs.

Irrigation on Australian Farms

Australian agricultural production helps provide food and clothing for a nation of over 20 million people. In addition, Australia exports around 65% of its agricultural production to international markets.

Achieving such a level of production in the driest inhabited continent on Earth is no easy task. In 2004-05, 35,000 farms irrigated 2.4 million hectares to supplement natural rainfall and, in doing so, applied around 65% of all water used by the nation. The product of this activity was goods to the value of \$9.1 billion, which was 23% of the total value of agricultural production in that year.

In January 2007, a ten-point plan was proposed by the Australian Government to improve national water efficiency. The proposal makes provision for investment in irrigation infrastructure, new engineering works, changed governance arrangements, and the creation of a taskforce to examine future land use in northern Australia.

In August 2007 the Water Act 2007 (Commonwealth) passed through both houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. This legislation makes provision for the fundamental aspects of the National Plan for Water Security to be implemented.

Sustaining the Mineral Resources Industry

Overall, mining activity accounts for around 8% of Australia's gross domestic product and has contributed over \$500 billion directly to Australia's wealth during the past 20 years. There are around 320,000 Australians employed in the industry, either directly or indirectly in support industries. Many are in sparsely populated, remote and regional Australia.

Australia is the world's largest exporter of black coal, iron ore and gold. It also holds the status of being the leading producer of bauxite and alumina as well as the second largest producer of uranium, lead and zinc; the third largest producer of iron ore, nickel, manganese and gold; the fourth largest producer of black coal, silver and copper; and the fifth largest producer of aluminium.

For more information regarding the 2008 Year Book, please visit the ABS website or call the National Information Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

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Services We Provide

Need Some Help? Services We Provide

ABS Information Consultancy

The WA Office of the ABS is able to provide a variety of consultancy services to meet your specific information and statistical needs. Our Information Service can give you access to all of the data collected by the ABS including demographic, social, health and environmental statistics, as well as a wide range of economic survey data.

Our trained information consultants can:

- assist you to identify the data required to meet your research, service delivery or policy development needs from a huge range of FREE data easily accessible from the ABS website.
- prepare customised tables and/or tailored reports, on a fee-for-service basis. Customised tables can be developed to provide data specific to your topic or geographic area. Tailored reports include additional detail such as graphs, commentary and/or maps, particularly useful when you need more descriptive data.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I'm not sure what data I need or if you even collect it. How can you help me?

A. Our experienced consultants will guide you through the range of products and services available. Many of these can be accessed free from the ABS website. We will discuss with

you, in detail, how you are planning to use the data and whether outputs need to be customised to meet your individual needs.

Q. I've seen a table on your website that is just what I need, except ...

A. The ABS usually publishes only key features from many of its statistical collections. More data are often available on request. Contact one of our consultants to discuss our customised table service.

Q. I'm thinking of setting up a new business in Perth. Can the ABS help me decide where to locate my business by providing a profile of the population within a defined radius of each potential location?

A. Yes, the ABS collects a wealth of information on the demographic and social characteristics of the population in your target area including age, education, employment and income levels etc.

Q. Will I have to pay?

A. While there is a very large amount of free information on the ABS website, the ABS charges on a fee-for-service basis for statistics that are tailored to meet customer needs. Most quotes are provided free. Charges incurred apply primarily to the time taken to research your request, extract and manipulate the data, and for analysis of the data undertaken on your behalf.

For further information contact Mike Thomas on (08) 9360 5353.

ABS Outposting Service

Did you know that an ABS officer can come and work with your team to develop and implement solutions to meet your agency's statistical needs?

An outposted officer is one of the best ways the ABS has to provide statistical support to agencies and other organisations. The officer's work could involve assisting with specific survey and questionnaire design, developing a data resource specifically to meet the agency's needs or identifying and documenting an agency's data collection.

An outposting may also provide a basis for an agency to review its own statistical environment and develop statistical and analytical skills within their agency. Outpostings can also assist agencies to improve the use of administrative data for statistical outputs which potentially could lead to a wider range of regional level data.

For further information about ABS outpostings contact Wavne Rikkers on (08) 9360 5385.

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Statistical News

Statistical News

Developments in ABS Statistics

Retirement in Australia

The Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia, Jul 2006 to Jun 2007 (cat. no. 6238.0) publication presents information about the retirement status and retirement intentions of people aged 45 years and over who have, at some time, worked for two weeks or more.

Data on retirement trends, the factors which influence decisions to retire and the income

arrangements that retirees and potential retirees have made to provide for their retirement are included.

The data are cross-classified by a range of demographic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status and country of birth, as well as labour force characteristics.

NatStats 08 Conference

Planning for the ABS hosted NatStats 08 Conference is well underway. The conference will be held on 19-21 November 2008 at the Crown Promenade in Melbourne and will connect users and producers of official statistics. The conference will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss strategies for improving statistics for policy and decision makers.

The main theme for the conference will be Working together for a better informed Australian Society. The NatStats 08 Conference will be linked with the global initiative being led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Measuring Progress in Societies as well as other Australian initiatives being developed through the 2020 Summit and the National Reform Agenda.

For further information on the conference please phone (02) 6252 6325.

Australia's Environment

Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2007 (cat. no. 4613.0) presents a broad selection of environmental statistics and information which illustrate topical environmental issues.

The most recent edition contains a feature article on water usage in Australia and explores issues including water availability, water management and conservation, water consumption and river health.

Other topics explored in this publication include trends in population, urbanisation, human activities, atmospheric changes and landscape changes.

Each issue of this publication will explore some of the relationships that exist between our use of the natural environment in Australia for socioeconomic benefit and the impacts that some of these activities have on our ecology and stocks of natural resources.

Time Use in Australia

How Australians Use Their Time, 2006 (cat. no. 4153.0), released 21 February 2008, provides detailed information on the daily activity patterns of people in Australia. The information is used to examine how people allocate time to activities such as paid and unpaid work, as well as analyse issues such as gender equality, care giving and balancing family and paid work responsibilities.

The data collected by this latest survey will be used by the ABS to derive a monetary value for all forms of unpaid work, which in turn will be used to update measures that assist in the analysis of the national accounts for the household sector.

Perspectives on Migrants

Perspectives on Migrants, 2007 (cat. no. 3416.0), released 25 February 2008, provides a series of articles that will inform the wider community about a range of migrant and ethnicity related issues.

Some of the articles covered in this publication include an analysis of birthplace and religion, migrants' experiences of crime victimisation, an analysis on overseas students and migrant English proficiency.

Client Liaison

Client Liaison

Summary of Events

ESCG & SSCG Review

The WA Office has commenced a review of the WA Economic and Social Consultative Group program. The aim of the review is to identify ways to improve cross-agency discussions related to data and statistical projects, both ABS and non-ABS, relevant to WA.

During this review clients from key state government departments and agencies will be approached for their views on the function and usefulness of the Economic and Social Consultative Group program. An emphasis of the review is to identify the key statistical issues and themes of interest to members, with a view to developing a discussion program around these.

Recommendations arising from the review will be implemented over the coming year.

Branch Restructure

The Client Services Branch and the Economic and Social Statistics Branch have recently amalgamated to create the Client and Statistical Services Branch. This restructure is part of an initiative to improve the ways in which the ABS provides services to its clients.

The new branch structure is as follows:

- Client Liaison and Information Services Section (contact Phil Smythe on 9360 5224)
- State Statistical Services (contact Trevor Draper on 9360 5394)
- Demography and Community Statistics (contact Lesley Martin on 9360 5320)
- Statistical Analysis (contact Gabriela Lawrence on 93605210).

Wavne Ridders is the Director of the new branch and can be contacted on 9360 5385.

Spatial Sciences

WA ABS Regional Director Michael Tindall was invited to be a guest speaker at the Spatial Sciences Institute function held on 19th February.

The Spatial Sciences Institute is a national body catering for the professional people who make up the spatial information industry. It gives a voice to the members of the spatial science community in both the national and international arena.

The focus of Michael's presentation was to demonstrate the strong link between statistics and maps.

Michael highlighted that by spatially enabling statistics, we are able to gain a better geographical understanding of the data and draw stronger, informative conclusions.

Recent Releases

Recent Releases

Publications of Interest

Publication Title	ABS Catalogue Number
Mesh Blocks Digital Boundaries, Aust., 2006	1209.0.55.002
Year Book Australia, 2008	1301.0
Australia at a Glance, 2008	1309.0
Australian Wine and Grape Industry, 2007	1329.0
Western Australian Statistical Indicators (WASI)	1367.5
Perspectives on Migrants, 2007	3416.0
How Australians Use Their Time, 2006	4153.0
Schools, Australia, Preliminary, 2007	4220.0
Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2007	4613.0
Overweight and Obesity in Adults, Aust., 04–05	4719.0
Housing Finance, Aust., Dec 2007	5609.0
Lending Finance, Aust., Dec 2007	5671.0
Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Aust., 06–07	6238.0
Underemployed Workers, Aust., Sep 2007	6265.0
Job Vacancies, Aust., Nov 2007	6354.0
Retail Trade, Aust., Jan 2008	8501.0
Building Activity, Aust., Sep 2007	8752.0
Engineering Construction Activity, Aust., Sep 2007	8762.0

Training

Training

Information and Course dates

The ABS provides a range of training courses that teach practical skills for high quality statistical collections and analysing statistical data.

We can teach you how to:

- Use statistics in decision making
- Design surveys / questionnaires
- Analyse statistical data
- Use data to write reports.

FREE TWO HOUR SEMINAR

Easy access to free ABS data.

Seminar dates

16 April

Registration closing date

9 April

14 May
11 June

7 May
4 June

TWO-DAY COURSES - \$750

Turning Data into Information

Registration Closing Date: 6 May

Course Date: 20 & 21 May

Basic Survey Design

Registration Closing Date: 27 May

Course Date: 10 & 11 June

For more information regarding training sessions, please contact Shalini Bellas on (08) 9360 5918, or email <training@abs.gov.au>.

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Next Edition

Next Edition

Issue 26: June quarter, 2008

The June quarter edition of the Stats Talk WA newsletter will provide an update on ABS client activity in Western Australia. In addition to this, the newsletter will highlight relevant information on new statistical developments, projects, publications, seminars and training sessions.

About this Release

Stats Talk is a newsletter produced by the Western Australian office of the ABS. It provides information about new developments, publications, seminars, training and reviews

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